The Southern PATRIOT

Vol. 11. No. 10
December, 1953

Published by the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc.

Equal educational opportunity for all persons, to the maximum of their individual abilities and without regard to economic status, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or ancestry is a major goal of American democracy. Only an informed, thoughtful, tolerant people can maintain and develop a free society.

A Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education.

Foreword

There are many who know that the public schools of the South, operating on a segregated basis, perform an incalculable disservice to white and Negro alike. They know the importance of the cases challenging segregation in education that are now being studied by the U.S. Supreme Court. They would welcome a decision ending the undemocratic and uneconomic "separate but equal" school systems.

But they are hesitant to speak their views. They are unfamiliar with legal history and cannot counter the glib distortions of the "constitutionalists" who defend segregation and who pretend to guard an "established" principle against "radical" reversal.

Too, these silent Southerners of good will may not see what firm ethical and sociological basis there is for their desire for decent schools—and how important integration is, not only to the region, but to the nation and to the world.

We have collected the following data in the effort to inform and to hearten those who wish to implement the ageless idea of brotherhood in an era of opportunity.

If School Bias Is Banned Why Won't South Abide?

Marion Palfi

THE FACTS OF CHILDHOOD DEFY THE HOARY HAIR-SPLITTERS

For Integration

I. What is the purpose of education?

Is it not a primary function of the schools to impart to our children the tradition and ideals of our democratic society? Do we not want this country's youth to grow up with normal, healthy minds? And is not the ability to approach personal and social problems ethically and scientifically the hallmark of mental health and development?

Segregated schools subvert all these objectives. Children, like adults, can only learn democracy by practicing it, for they "learn what they live."

II. Segregation means inferior, overpriced, maldistributed educational facilities. Where a state can hardly afford one school system, the maintenance of two systems is a criminal luxury.

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For Segregation

I. By tradition, the South is a segregated society. Integrated schools would be unrealistic, if not positively harmful.

II. In the **Plessy** case the U. S. Supreme Court recognized the need and set forth the constitutional basis for segregation. Should the present court reverse this precedent the states will find means—legally or extralegally—to avoid compliance.

III. Nothing will be served by a judicial writ abolishing the separate school systems of 17 states. Nothing, that is, except the cause of discord, chaos and Communism.

IV. Segregation is NOT discrimination. There are schools set up exclusively for boys and other schools exclusively for girls. Is either sex discriminated

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FOR INTEGRATION

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III. Segregation frustrates the Negro student and inflates the white with harmful illusions of superiority. Negro and white are one community in the South —economically, culturally, and in every other sense. But separate schools equip the children of neither race for the dealings they must have with one another in adult life.

IV. Separate schools form the child's first sharp awareness of the state's policy of segregation. Here segregation breeds its "tradition" and distorts and vitiates all religious, ethical and objective inquiry.

V. This tragedy of **miseducation** becomes a national and international scandal when the democratic doctrines of the United States are weighed by a world that is two-thirds colored.

VI. But few Southern backers of segregation contend that "separate but equal" schools are **just**—they can only argue that they are **legal.**

VII. The **Plessy** case is often cited, but without reference to the fact that it dealt with transportation facilities and not with education.

VIII. Should the court outlaw segregation in public schools it will not mark a reversal of precedent. It will be simply a logical extension of the reasoning that governed the court's decisions in recent cases involving higher education.

IX. But, "Is the South ready for integrated schools?" That nervous query oftentimes doesn't really seek an answer—for the answer can only be found in trying integration. The removal of racial restrictions in voting, dining car transportation and graduate schools—all by court order—are encouraging in their success. Should the broader step of opening all schools create a greater furor in the South, could not the assumption be made that the conflict will be between those forces that oppose democracy and those who uphold it, **in the same proportion and with the same decorum that exists in the country as a whole?**

Those regional apologists who deny this cast the greatest slur upon the South.

FOR SEGREGATION

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against by this arrangement? There are church schools and private schools. No one can say that any of these schools, with their particular purposes, discriminate against those children who are not eligible to attend.

V. It must be remembered that the relationship between Negro and white in the South is, perforce, the relationship between servant and master. This economic arrangement has cultural implications that make it impossible for Negro and white children to share harmoniously and profitably a single classroom.

VI. Indeed, it can be asserted that the Southern Negro really doesn't want integration in public schools. He is not equipped to compete with whites of better backgrounds; he would feel much more inferior sitting in mixed classes than he would among a group of his own kind.

VII. This clamor for integration has weakened support for the public schools at a time when the Southern states are planning to appropriate record amounts for Negro education. It must be recognized that a vocal body of public opinion regards any move to put white and Negro on an equal footing as an attempt to "mongrelize" the white race.

VIII. Integration has been properly called "theoretical idealism." It is refuted by the unquestionable progress the Negro has made with segregation. The adherents of integration, in the words of the Southern members of the President's Commission on Higher Education, "impede progress and threaten tragedy to the people of the South."

IX. The control of education is a right properly reserved for the States free from Federal interference. Furthermore, there is nothing in the Constitution which says that States are required to provide public schools. It follows that a State may, if it desires, abolish its public schools.

Questions and Answers

Compulsory segregation in schools—where?

Discrimination against racial, religious and national groups in public schools is widespread in the United States. In this bulletin we are concerned primarily with the 17 Southern and border states and the District of Columbia, where separate schools are mandatory for white and colored students: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia.

What is the historical explanation and justification for segregated schools?

Segregation is based on the assumption of superior and inferior races. It is assumed that the Negro child is not good enough to associate with the white child.

At the turn of the present century when "white supremacy" was formalized in segregation statutes, the idea of superior and inferior races was at least moot. Today, as the result of scientific research such an idea is no longer intellectually tenable.

According to a joint statement by a group of the world's outstanding anthropologists and geneticists. "Today, although science is still exploring many aspects of race, it can answer with an unqualified 'no' these three fundamental questions:

Is there a pure race?

Is there a superior race?

Are there absolute and unchangeable race differences?" (1)

How does segregation affect school facilities?

Segregation results in a system of schools for Negroes vastly inferior to those for white children. In 1947-48, the latest year for which complete data is available:

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Questions and Answers

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1. **The average median investment per pupil** (white and Negro) for 10 Southern states was $212, for Negro pupils it was $78. (2)
2. **Average annual expenditures,** per white pupil was $135, per Negro pupil $75. (3)
3. 7,000 out of 8,500 **one-room schools** were for Negro pupils (in 8 states). (4)
4. **Number of pupils** per white teacher was 29, per Negro teacher 34. (5)
5. **Percentage of pupils transported** in 12 states: white 50%, Negro less than 20%; in Georgia: white 52%, Negro 8%; in Mississippi: white 71%, Negro 7%. (6)
6. **Expenditure per pupil for school lunches** (7 states) white $4.31, Negro $1.00; in Georgia, white $5.37, Negro .68c; Mississippi white $6.94, Negro .01c. (7)

Can the South afford two School Systems?

Southern states with **more children** (a ratio of children to adults of 44% compared to 30% in the North East) and **less wealth** (1950 per capita income $955, national average $1,436) cannot adequately support one school system. To maintain two systems places an unnecessary burden on tax-payers and offers both white and Negro children a poorer education than would be possible under integration. (8)

The Southern PATRIOT

THE SOUTHERN PATRIOT published monthly except July and August by **The Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc.** Office of publication, 417 Commerce St., Nashville, Tenn. Editorial and Executive Offices, Room 404, 822 Perdido Street, New Orleans 12, La. Twenty-five cents a copy, $2.00 a year. Entered as second-class mail matter, Nashville, Tennessee.

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822 Perdido St., New Orleans, La.

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Are we not making progress toward equality?

It is true that expenditures for Negro schools have increased considerably, but the gap was so large to begin with that schools for Negroes remain far inferior to those for whites. In 1950 Dr. Ambrose Caliver wrote a restrospective piece "Fifty Years of Progress in Public Education" in which he stated that in 1948 the expenditure per Negro pupil in 9 Southern states was $75, an increase of 129%. However, the current expense for whites was still 80% greater than for Negroes in spite of this increase.

The Mississippi legislature is considering Governor White's proposal for an "equalization fund" of $1,000,000,000. By spending $5,600,000 per year, "some sponsors of the program estimate it would take Mississippi some 30 to 40 years to put her school system in shape where it could be called 'equalized'." (9)

What is the effect of segregation on prejudice?

Through segregation pupils "learn" racial prejudice; through integration they "learn" equality.

"...Legal segregation, because it is legal, because it is obvious for everyone, gives what we call in our lingo environmental support for the belief that Negroes are in some way different from and inferior to white people, and that in turn, of course supports and strengthens beliefs of racial differences, of racial inferiority. I would say that legal segregation is both an effect, a consequence of racial prejudice, and in turn a cause of continued racial prejudice. (10)

"Children and youth can acquire by learning the equipment of habits, attitudes and belief that constitute foundations of equality, quite as easily as they acquire those that lead to discrimination. The psychological equipment that is acquired depends primarily upon the social environment in which the learning takes place. (11)

What is the effect of segregation upon the Negro child?

Expert witnesses have testified that compulsory segregation injures Negro pupils by:

1. Impairing their ability to learn.
2. Deterring the development of their personalities.
3. Depriving them of equal status in the school community.
4. Destroying their self-respect.
5. Denying them full opportunity for democratic social development.
6. Subjecting them to the prejudices of others and stamping them with a badge of inferiority. (12)

How does the Negro pupil regard segregation?

...most of the children we have examined interpret segregation in one way. . . . They think they are being punished for something which is not explained to them, and certainly not for something they have done. (13)

How does segregation affect the Negro pupils attitude toward democracy and the State?

I asked one of the children in the group "Who forbids you to go to these schools?" And I quote—the child says, "The State", And I said, "Who is the State?" And the boy said "The State is the Government." And I said, "Why does the Government forbid it?" And he said, "That I don't know."

What we found in the minds of these children was in image in which the State identified itself with its most bigoted citizens.

One of the children talked about discrimination in relation to school, and said, "It is only the plain Americans that do that . . . the plain white Americans.

I really didn't quite get it, . . . so we asked, "Who are the other people?"

And then the children told us about the other people. Now the other people are the Poles, Italians, Jews, Catholics, Dutch and Germans . . . They all agreed with this child. The "foreigners" treated them well, or better anyway. The Catholics let them go to their schools, the Italians let them go to their restaurants, . . . What a division this creates! (14)

What is the effect of segregation upon the white child?

Now the effect of white children identifying themselves with Negro children may not be so very generally known, but we have found that over and over again. I would like to give an example. If we drive along the road in a car and we run over a rabbit, it makes us feel bad, because we identify ourselves with the rabbit. Consciously we may not admit

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Questions and Answers

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that, but unconsciously that is what we are doing, so it is not so unheard of when I say that many white children at different ages spontaneously identify themselves with these Negro children and feel more or less the same way about it as they do, especially in these certain bad effects.

Now, as for the ones who do not identify themselves with Negro children through various—I call them accidental reasons—for them it creates an illusion of superiority. . .

How is this child, when he becomes an adolescent, even—how is he to find his way ethically in the world if he has been indoctrinated with the illusion of superiority? (15)

What is the origin of the "Separate but Equal" dogma?

Those who defend segregation in egal grounds usually base their case in the *Plessy* case (1896) in which a majority of the Supreme Court ruled that "Separate and Equal" railway accommodations for passengers in intrastate travel did not violate the Constitution. (16)

What has the Supreme Court said concerning "Separate but Equal" in higher education?

In the *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* cases the Court held in 9 to 0 decisions in 1950 that to separate the races in graduate and professional education violated the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

In ordering the University of Texas to admit Heman Marion Sweatt to its law school the Court cited the obvious physical inequalities of the Jim Crow law school, then the Court, in a most significant statement, pointed out that even "more important" than the physical and quantitative factors were certain intangible "qualities which are incapable of measurement."

George Washington McLaurin, a graduate student at the University of Oklahoma was segregated in the classroom, library and cafeteria. Said the Court, "such restrictions impair and inhibit his ability to study, to engage in discussions and exchange of views with other students and in general to learn his profession . . . State imposed restrictions which produce such inequalities cannot be sustained." (17)

Obviously the logic of these 2 cases applied to elementary and second schools indicate an end to segregation in all state supported education.

What has the Supreme Court ruled concerning segregation in other areas?

In recent years the Court has steadily and consistently narrowed the areas in which a State may classify its citizens by race, for example, in the ownership and occupancy of real property; in the selection of juries; in interstate travel, and in primary elections. (18)

Has segregation of pupils, other than Negroes been outlawed?

In California, *Mendez v. Westminster School District*, (1946), and in Texas, *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District*, (1948) Federal Judges Paul J. McCormick and Ben H. Rice, Jr., held that the segregation of Mexican children in public schools violated the equal protection of the law as guaranteed by the 14th Amendment of the Constitution. (19)

> *Our Constitution is color blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. * * **
>
> *We boast of the freedom enjoyed by our people above all other peoples. But it is difficult to reconcile that boast with a state of the law which, practically, puts the brand of servitude and degradation upon a large class of our fellow citizens, our equals before the law. The thin disguise of "equal" accommodations * * * will not mislead anyone, or atone for the wrong this day done.*
>
> Justice Harlan, a Kentuckian, in his dissenting opinion in the *Plessy* case.

What evidence is there that the South is "ready" for integrated schools?

The South accepted calmly, the Supreme Court ruling outlawing segregation in state supported institutions of higher learning, in interstate travel, and in primary elections. Also no difficulty was experienced at Army and Air Force installations in the South in shifting overnight from segregation to complete integration in all aspects of life on the post, including schools.

White and colored Nurses associations have merged, 27 state and county medical societies have either admitted Negro physicians or amended their rules to make this possible. Negroes are being appointed and elected to school boards and other municipal bodies, 14 major Southern cities have dropped racial bars in libraries. Clearly there is a definite trend in the South toward integration. (20) And wherever it is tried, it is accepted and it works indicating that the South is much more "ready" than is generally supposed to be the case, to follow democratic leadership.

References

1. What is Race? Evidence from Scientists, 1952, UNESCO, p. 7.
2. Eli Ginzberg and Douglas W. Bray, The Uneducated, 1953, p. 194.
3. Ambrose Caliver, Fifty Years of Progress in Public Education, 1950, p. 9.
4. Ginzberg, p. 195.
5. Ibid., p. 199; 6. Ibid; 7. Ibid, p. 200; 8. Ibid., pp. 188-189.
9. Times-Picayune, New Orleans, 11-29-53.
10. Dr. David Krech, visiting professor of social psychology, Harvard University, in his testimony in the Clarendon Co. case, as reported by the Carolina Times, Durham, 6-16-51.
11. Dean James L. Hupp, West Virginia Wesleyan College, "Methods of Eliminating Discrimination, the Educational Approach," in Discrimination in Higher Education, p. 50.
12. Brief for Appelants, p. 16, in appeal No. 101 before the October term, 1952, of the U. S. Supreme Court, in the Clarendon County School case, October, 1952.
13. 14, 15. Dr. Frederic Wertham was one of the expert witnesses in the Delaware segregation school case. He testified that segregation is injurious to the child's mental health and therefore a menace to the health of the entire community. His findings, based on interviews with Negro and white children, aged 9 to 16, attending Delaware public schools, were summarized in the Patriot, May 1952, and the American Journal of Psychotherapy, Jan. 1952.
16. See the Patriot, for Nov. 1953, "Williams vs. Talmadge: Which Way South," for the complete text of the argument by Gov. Talmadge.
17. See "Three Supreme Court Decisions Undermine Legal Segregation," Patriot, June, 1950.
18. See Morroe Berger, Equality by Statute, 1952.
19. George I. Sanchez, Concerning Segregation of Spanish-Speaking Children in the Public Schools, University of Texas, 1951.
20. For further documentation of this encouraging trend consult the Patriot for the past 3 or 4 years.

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